

Approved
REGULAR MEETING
January 19, 2016

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on January 19, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Bello, Hemmann, Hurley, Latina (arrived late), Martino, Rell, Spinella, Deputy Mayor Barry.

Mayor Montinieri was absent.

Also present: Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks & Recreation; James Cetran, Police Chief; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Martino.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

PUBLIC HEARING – NONE

Gus Colantonio of 16 Morrison Avenue was pleased the sign he mentioned needing replacement was replaced on Wednesday or Thursday after his comment. He also mentioned an article in the November 2015 CT Magazine. It rated all the towns in Connecticut, out of 46 in the same category as Wethersfield, under Education, Wethersfield came in at No. 39 out of 46. What is Wethersfield doing wrong? Every year he hears about the need to spend more money, education is No. 1. This does not show that education is No. 1. 82% of the Board of Education's budget goes to salaries and benefits. Are the teachers and the Board of Education accountable for what they are doing?

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road commented that the articles in the paper: about GE planning on leaving Connecticut; an article concerning home sales and taking a loss; He feels the folks in Hartford, at the Capital, don't know what they are doing and our Council should stand up to them and let them know about it. The state is in horrible shape and being run by a bunch of people who don't know what they are doing. Then there is double dipping; Hartford awarding raises; but we are suffering because of all of that. We are getting the pains from what Hartford does wrong and nobody here talks about it. What a game plan these people play. They have the feedback on all of us for the money that they need. We know what his game plan is.

Tom Mazzearella of 600 Wolcott Hill Road commented about the upcoming budget process. Everybody should realize that the State is in a lot of trouble and it is only going to get worse with a projected deficit in 2020. Where are they going to get the extra money? A lot of people go paycheck to paycheck, think about these people when you are working on the budget. To reduce spending, you have to get all the departments on board. History is that once you have a budget, you spend the budget and if you don't spend the money that was allocated; you don't get it the next year. The Board of Education had almost a million dollar surplus. They went out and spent it. They bought some computers which they probably needed but they could have thrown that money back into next year's kitty. Tonight there is an agenda item for the Police Department to replace a vehicle. If they have a number of vehicles, why do they need a vehicle that holds four police officers for surveillance? Why not take two vehicles that you already have? A brand new Ford pickup truck seems like they would be drawing attention to themselves. He understands its asset forfeiture money but that's not free money. Throw that money back into the till and reduce some other spending.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Hemmann reported that she attended the Housing Authority meeting on January 11, 2016. They had a public hearing regarding a rent increase for their tenants. Tenants came and spoke. They have two solar projects that were approved through Eversource. One will be on the Fuller Housing building and the other is on the administration area. She asked them to reach out to Town Manager Bridges with regard to questions they had with regards to the pilot.

Councilor Martino reported that he attended the Conservation Commission meeting. The manager talked about the future of combining with the Wetlands Commission and said that Rocky Hill had done this and it makes sense. A Commissioner had questions and some concerns about the Wilkus triangle which the manager addressed with him.

He also stated there was a Budget & Finance Committee meeting in which committee members, other Councilors, a few members of the Board of Education, the Manager, the Finance Director, Superintendent of Schools and the Business Manager were in attendance. The Auditor sat down with them and went over the report of last year's audit ending June 2015. A lot of things had been corrected. They had a lot of praise for the new Business Manager who has come in at the Board of Education and for the Town Manager and our Finance Director for the work they have done. The Finance Director and Business Manager were asked to work on together to develop one policy for both sides. They also suggested a fraud alert line and the need for a third party administrator for the Firemen's Pension Fund. The Manager is currently working on RFQ for that. The Pension Actuary was there to go over her preliminary numbers for the budget as well as to educate new members on how the pension plan is administered. She discussed what goes into her calculations and she answered questions. The committee then went into executive session to review the request for qualifications for Town Attorney that have been received. The number was reduced and interviews will be conducted on the 27th so we should have recommendation for Council at the next meeting.

Council Hurley commented that the Policies and Procedures Manuals were needed but they also stated that they needed information from the Board of Education for payroll. He didn't expect it to be complete yet but would appreciate at least one page of information.

Councilor Bello stated that the Rules and Procedures Committee met and they discussed some possible changes including the implementation of a consensus agenda, abbreviated minutes and some housekeeping changes but nothing was decided.

Deputy Mayor Barry indicated that he had attended the Building Committee meeting. Some over expenditures and change orders were addressed. With regard to the project: the area to the east side when you drive down from Wolcott Hill those two floors will be occupied for the next semester. The auditorium is still on track for March in terms of furniture and fixtures. At the next meeting a report will be available. Everything is on schedule and everyone is working hard on the budget side to make sure it comes in under budget. The east side, where there were science classrooms in deplorable condition and classes weren't able to have labs, we are now moving into the phase where the students will be able to use a more state of the art facility.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hemmann questioned if there was an update about the property at the north end on the Berlin Turnpike, the used car lot that was okayed to go in there. Was it going forward?

Town Manager Bridges stated that the hurdle was that they were required to put in a permanent surface

down which was more expensive than what they anticipated so they are still evaluating.

Councilor Hemmann also questioned about the Wethersfield shopping center and a potential health hazard with rats and could the Health Department look into that.

Councilor Hurley asked about the old Weight Watchers building and whether there was any action on that.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Bridges indicated that it is meeting time of year and everybody has busy schedules with different committees they are attending but he asked that the Councilors look at their calendars for April 23, which is the week after school vacation, for the Budget Meeting with the Department Heads after the Public Hearing and let him know if that works.

TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATION

Town Clerk Sassano announced the Connecticut Presidential Preference Primary will be April 26, 2016. If you are already in a party you will be able to vote in that party's primary. If you want to change your party, you will have to do it by January 26 or you will not be able to vote in different party primary. If you are unaffiliated you can join a party and be able to vote in their primary.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Martino moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MIKE SCAVETTA ON THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD"**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Hemmann moved **"TO ACCEPT THE REPUBLICAN APPOINTMENTS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY"**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Design Review Advisory Committee

Andrea L. Boyle R 703 Wolcott Hill Rd 1-19-16 to 1-1-2019

Steven C. Hine R 294 Hang Dog Lane 1-19-16 to 1-1-2019

Redevelopment Agency

Colleen E. Sheridan R 31 State Street 1-1-16 to 6-30-20

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Martino moved **"TO ACCEPT THE DEMOCRATIC APPOINTMENTS TO THE DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CENTRAL CT HEALTH DISTRICT, HUMAN RIGHTS & RELATIONS COMMISSION, YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD AND TOURISM COMMISSION"**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Design Review Advisory Committee

Joseph E. Hickey Jr. D 28 Meadow View Drive 1-19-16 to 1-1-19

Central Connecticut Health District [to fill a vacancy]

Ann Marie Diloreto D 143 Eastern Drive 1-19-16 to 6-30-16

Human Rights and Relations Commission

David Zagaja D 19 Wildwood Drive 1-19-16 to 6-30-18

Youth Advisory Board

David Zagaja D 19 Wildwood Drive 1-19-16 to 6-30-18

Tourism Commission

Julie E. Lemos U 21 Clovercrest Rd 1-19-16 to 6-30-19

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Martino moved **“TO CORRECT THE TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020 OF MDC COMMISSIONER DANIEL CAMILLIERE, NOT 2021”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

OTHER BUSINESS

Town Clerk Sassano stated that every year the meeting dates for the Town Council have to be approved which are usually the first and third Monday of the month except whenever there is a holiday like Martin Luther King day, the date of your meetings are set by Charter to be exactly the next day; that happens in a couple of places. The Board of Education has to present their budget, which they drop off at the Town Clerk's office on March 15 and get delivered to your homes. They will make a presentation at the March 21 meeting. The public hearing for the Town Budget is set by Charter and will be in the Town Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on April 18, 2016 with your set date of May 15. There are days as in the past where Council has chosen to change some dates, cancel a meeting or postpone it. Labor Day, always Monday. And if it is the 1st Monday of September, your meeting will be on Tuesday when we return. Usually the night before election which this year is November 7, Council may choose to eliminate it as the Clerk of Council duties regarding Elections as Town Clerk. These are the recommended meeting dates.

Councilor Bello moved **“TO ACCEPT THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR THE YEAR 2016 WITH THE CORRECTION OF JUNE 30 TO JUNE 20”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks & Recreation and Social & Youth Services was invited to the podium to explain this grant. It helps them with the preventive programs in town for the Wethersfield students. They do a couple of things with the students but probably the one most familiar is the after school programs at the Silas Deane Middle School which this helps to fund. This year they plan on doing a survey working with the school district and some of the grades in both the Middle School and the High School. They are beginning to get ready and this grant will help to fund that. We have been fortunate to get this grant and in the past it has been around \$4,800 so this is the highest we've gotten so far.

Councilor Martino moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ACCEPT A CAPITAL AREA SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNCIL (CASAC) GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,323 TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL PREVENTION COUNCIL IN WETHERSFIELD WHICH IS THE WETHERSFIELD YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

BIDS

Chief Cetran, invited to the podium, explained they have a number of undercover vehicles, clunkers, but he likes to keep one that is in good shape for safety reasons for the long distance surveillance events. We have multiple officers with their equipment and the Ranger was just too small. It is also used to pull the trailer for shooting because we have to shoot in Berlin. We don't have a range here and we have all our equipment in a trailer gotten through a grant 15 or 20 years ago. This truck will be able to pull that where the Ranger wasn't. We also use it to put up the recording devices that measures speeds on different streets. The officers need to get up high onto the pole to put them up and the truck will help with that. We are purchasing it out of asset forfeiture funds which cannot be used for any other reasons other than non-budgeted type items. They want to upgrade the truck that they have now.

Asset forfeiture funds come from drug dealers. They are the assets that we seize during drug arrests that we share with either the state government or the federal government. They take their piece out of it. We were fortunate enough a couple of years ago to get a substantial amount of money from the federal government with regards to asset forfeiture from a case that we were involved with. That money cannot be used or can't supplant any budgeted money and can't be used for something that is in the budget. It can be used for anything along the lines of police work or narcotics work which this truck will be used for. The problem with the ranger was that some of the officers are big and the inside of the truck was too small. Asset forfeiture is a god sent. But now the federal government has shut that down so we have to look to make sure that we spend the money correctly and do it right. He believes that there is about \$800,000 in that account currently.

Councilor Spinella moved **“TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE 2015 FORD 150 INCLUDING TRADING IN THE 2010 FORD RANGER”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION - NONE

Councilor Latina arrived at the meeting.

MINUTES

Councilor Bello moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 21, 2015”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella. Changes: DiBacco spelling; 20 not 120; Wildwood – one word; Deputy Mayor not Councilor.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Bello moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2016”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8--0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio of 16 Morrison Avenue commented that he has been asking for about 6-7 years now why he can't get a stop sign in the eastbound direction. It doesn't meet the intersection sight distance required for a 25 mph and yet 35% of the people on that street go 31mph so there is something going on. People go faster than 25 mph and there are about 40 kids a few years ago that crossed the street on the most unsafe spot on Morrison Avenue. In 1955 Morrison Avenue did not connect to Silas Deane Highway and then the town opened it up and connected it. All the deficiency on that street when you compare it to Hillcrest Avenue yet they have three stop signs at the intersection and we have two. He doesn't know what it is going to take.

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road stated that Mr. Colantonio has a very good valid reason for needing a stop sign on his street. It's a narrow street and the front yards are extremely close to the road. He thinks it's a Town of Wethersfield problem. He urged the Council to vote to give him a sign to slow traffic down. At the last Town Council meeting he stated that there is a great big hole of debt going on in the entire country and the State of Connecticut owes another big debt of money but tonight you took a \$5,000 grant that they don't have the money to give you. They have to go out and borrow that lousy \$5,300. Does that make any sense? We come down here to see you and you do zip. We just give the money to the bank. Yet you spend like there is no tomorrow. He cited an article that said Council, Town Manager begins budgetary discussions and right off the bat it mentions that the MDC and debt service that is going up. You encouraged the citizens to vote to for the MDC water project and knew that it was going up. Now we or the town is looking at a 5.75% increase from the MDC. We have enough things going up; especially our taxes so he wants the Council think and remember the people out there who are unable to pay these taxes.

At 7:50 p.m. Councilor Bello moved to **“ADJOURN TO BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Vote: Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 p.m., Councilor Martino moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**", seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Vote: Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
February 1, 2016